

**South Dakota National Guard
Public Affairs Office**

2823 West Main St.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702

Phone 605-737-6721
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Fifteen earn officer commissions at National Guard ceremony

STURGIS, S.D. – Fifteen officer candidates from the South Dakota Army National Guard were pinned as second lieutenants at a commissioning ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 16, at the Sturgis Community Center.

Completing Officer Candidate School (OCS) on July 25, the ceremony marked the final step in these Soldiers' quest to become an officer.

"The most challenging part is coming to terms with how you will be perceived as a leader," said 2nd Lt. Keith Bryant, who was awarded the Erickson Trophy as the top honor graduate.

This year's class was noted for its military experience since 12 of the candidates served tours in the Global War on Terror.

"These young men and women have been challenged by war," said Brig. Gen. Keith Corbett, assistant adjutant general. "They are committed to lead with honor and respect."

Nine of the candidates completed the traditional 14-month course while the six others took the eight-week, "Fast Track" program. Both courses, held at the Regional Training Institute at Fort Meade, train the candidates on basic military tasks including physical training, drill and ceremony and troop leading procedures. They are placed in high stress, high intensity environments and challenged to make effective tactical decisions.

Several presentations were made throughout the ceremony to include:

- The Battalion Leadership Development Award was presented to the 153rd Engineer Battalion for having the greatest number of students graduating from OCS.
- Benjamin Abbey received the Army Physical Fitness Test Award for obtaining the highest score on the fitness test.

- Marvin Miller won the Endeavor Award for demonstrating the highest degree of consistent advancement, perseverance and devotion to duty throughout the year.
- The Superintendent Academic Award was presented to Cody Byrum who attained the highest academic rating for the year. (95.5 percent)
- Keith Bryant received the Reserve Association Plaque for attaining the highest leadership grades for the training year.

The following is a list of graduates of Officer Candidate School Class 52:

Shawn Abbas, Pierre, Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion; **Benjamin Abbey**, Wessington, Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion; **Billi Jo Bierle**, Sturgis, 881st Troop Command; **Keith Bryant**, Webster, 82nd Civil Support Team; **Cody Byrum**, Pierre, 200th Engineer Company; **Cody Eastman**, Clear Lake, 740th Transportation Company; **Kimberly Eimers**, Rapid City, Joint Force Headquarters; **Brent Lange**, Brookings, 842nd Engineer Company; **Marvin Miller**, Hartford, Battery A, 1/147th Field Artillery; **John Peary**, Pierre, 235th Military Police Company; **John Schesselman**, Rapid City, 842nd Engineer Company; **Thomas Stewart**, Rapid City, 842nd Engineer Company; **Eric Tobin**, Pierre, 82nd Civil Support Team; **Steven Torpey**, Rapid City, 109th Regional Support Group; **Michael Williams**, Rapid City, 109th Regional Support Group.



080816-A-5202T-048: STURGIS, S.D. -- Capt. Travis Eastman (left) and Shane Eastman (right) pin their brother 2nd Lt. Cody Eastman, an officer candidate graduate from Clear Lake, S.D. during the Class 52 graduation ceremony on Saturday Aug. 16, at the Sturgis Community Center. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/080816-A-5202T-048.jpg>



080816-A-5202T-003: STURGIS, S.D. --Fifteen South Dakota Army National Guard members promoted to the rank of second lieutenant at the Officer Candidate School graduation, Class 52, on Saturday, Aug. 16, at the Sturgis Community Center. (Back left to right) Billi Jo Bierle, Sturgis, 881st Troop Command; Benjamin Abbey, Wessington, A-139th Brigade Support Battalion; Cody Eastman, Clear Lake, 740th Transportation Company; Michael Williams, Rapid City, 109th Regional Support Group; Marvin Miller, Hartford, A-1/147th Field Artillery; Steven Torpey, Rapid City, 109th Regional Support Group; and Eric Tobin, Pierre, 82nd Civil Support Team; (Front left to right) John Peary, Pierre, 235th Military Police Company; Shawn Abbas, Pierre, A-139th Brigade Support Battalion; Keith Bryant, Webster, 82nd Civil Support Team; John Schlesselman, Rapid City, 842nd Engineer Company; Thomas Stewart, Rapid City, 842nd Engineer Company; Cody Byrum, Pierre, 200th Engineer Company; Kimberly Eimers, Rapid City, Joint Force Headquarters; and Brent Lange, Brookings, 842nd Engineer Company. (Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen) (RELEASED)

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Orson Ward at (605) 737-6721, or cell (605) 431-8753, or contact Lt. Col Tim Moran at (605) 737-6455.